



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Local Law Enforcement Team Wins National Honor For Its Work Against Child Exploitation - Award Recognizes U.S. Attorney's Office, FBI, Metropolitan Police Department -**

WASHINGTON - The Department of Justice is presenting a national award today to a law enforcement team from the District of Columbia for its extraordinary work in a series of cases that targeted dangerous sexual offenders who preyed on children.

The team's efforts were cited by the Justice Department in a category that annually honors the nation's most outstanding multi-agency operation. The honor is being presented at the National Strategy Conference on Combating Child Exploitation in San Jose, Calif. It is among the 2011 Department of Justice Combating Child Exploitation Awards.

The award recognizes the impact of a long-term investigation that led to the successful prosecution in 2009 and 2010 of six extremely dangerous sexual offenders, including two individuals who distributed child pornography and four others who produced child pornography in the District of Columbia, Florida and North Carolina. The latter four defendants, including a university professor, got prison terms ranging from 15 to 27 years for their crimes.

The investigation led to the rescue of four very young child victims - relatives of the defendants. Some of them had been sexually abused and photographed.

The investigation was a collaborative effort by the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), the FBI's Washington Field Office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia. It was among numerous successful cases handled by the FBI's Child Exploitation Task Force, which includes members of the FBI's Washington Field Office and MPD.

"Far too many children suffer sexual abuse and exploitation at the hands of the very people who are trusted to protect them," said U.S. Attorney Machen. "Through this investigation, we were able to rescue four very young children from unspeakable acts. The U.S. Attorney's Office will continue to work closely with the Child Exploitation Task Force to target dangerous sex offenders and to save children who are still suffering in silence."

“Children are our most precious resource and the FBI’s Child Exploitation Task Force will do everything we can to protect them,” said Assistant Director McJunkin. “I am proud of the work that our Special Agents do to stop those who engage in producing child pornography, and that we are able to give victims and their families closure.”

“I sincerely hope that this long and thorough investigation that led to the arrest of six dangerous sex offenders sends the message to all, that the Metropolitan Police Department will continue to work side by side with our partners to investigate, find, and arrest any sexual offender who is in violation of the law,” said Chief Lanier. “Tomorrow’s leaders are today’s children, and we all need to do our part to protect them.”

In Washington, D.C., since January 1, 2011, more than a dozen people have been charged with various offenses, including production, possession, receipt, transportation and distribution of child pornography and attempting to entice a minor into engaging in illicit sexual activity.

In one recent case, a man was sentenced to 11 years in prison for traveling to the District of Columbia to have sexual contact with a minor. Other recent cases involve a college professor who collected more than 100,000 images of child pornography, an Army Reservist who distributed images containing child pornography from overseas, and a police officer accused of traveling from Maryland to the District of Columbia to have sexual contact with a child.

The prosecution of these cases is part of the Department of Justice’s Project Safe Childhood initiative. Project Safe Childhood is a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice.

Led by U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafechildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov).